

PHIL2300-001: BEGINNING PHILOSOPHY

MWF 10:00-10:50, Eng/Phil 160 (plus discussion sections, below)

Instructor

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Teaching Assistants

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Discussion Sections

2300-701 11:00-11:50 Fridays, Eng-Phil 151 (*Spreng*)
2300-702 12:00-12:50 Fridays, Eng-Phil 151 (*Spreng*)
2300-703 1:00-1:50 Fridays, Eng-Phil 150 (*Keehn*)
2300-704 2:00-2:50 Fridays, Eng-Phil 150 (*Keehn*)

Course Description

This is a general introduction to philosophy, designed to acquaint students with certain significant problems as they are considered by major philosophical figures. These are not esoteric questions but instead ones central to ordinary human experience. Students will be encouraged to formulate and defend their own answers to these questions, using the concepts and methods of inquiry introduced in the course. This process will help improve students' abilities to think more critically and to communicate with greater clarity and precision.

This course satisfies the Texas Tech University core curriculum requirement in humanities.

Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to: think critically, demonstrate an understanding of the possibility of multiple interpretations, cultural contexts, and values.

Humanities Core Curriculum Objective: The objective of the humanities in a core curriculum is to expand the student's knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behaviors, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought. Through study in disciplines such as literature and philosophy, students will engage in critical analysis and develop an appreciation of the humanities as fundamental to the health and survival of any society

| <i>Learning Outcome</i> | <i>Assessment Method*</i> |
|--|---|
| 1) Develop analytical arguments in written and/or oral forms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two essays.• Class discussion. |
| 2) Develop an in-depth understanding of some of the central areas of philosophical research. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two essays.• Two exams.• Pop quizzes.• Class discussion. |

*For details, see Course Requirements, below.

Core Text

- Perry, Bratman, and Fischer (eds.), *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Fifth Edition (2009: Oxford: ISBN: 978-0-1953-9036-0)

(Additional readings will be available in PDF format on my website, www.tytoken.com. These are indicated under the course schedule below as “[WEB]”).

Course Requirements

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class:

A+: 97-100; A: 94-96; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63.

Papers

There are two papers assigned during the course of this term. The first paper will be worth 20% of your final grade and will be returned to you with comments. The second paper will be worth 25% of your grade, but will not be returned to you unless specifically requested by you.

- First paper assigned Wednesday, February 18, and due Wednesday, March 2.
- Second paper assigned Friday, April 15, and due Friday, April 29.

Assignments submitted late without explicit extensions or authorized excuses will receive a penalty of one letter grade (10%) per day since the due date. Final papers will not be accepted after Monday, May 2 for any reason.

Exams

There will be two exams for this class, with the midterm held on Friday, March 5, and the final held during the May 5-10 exam period (currently listed as May 7, 10:30-1:00). The midterm exam is worth 20% of your final grade, and the final exam is worth 25%.

Quizzes

There will be eight short pop quizzes held throughout the term, some during lecture and others during discussion sections. The six quizzes with the *highest* scores will make up 10% of your grade; the two quizzes with the *lowest* scores will be dropped. Quizzes will last approximately five minutes, and will focus on the readings assigned for the day the quiz is held, or readings from that week.

Special Accommodations

- Students with disabilities that require special class or exam accommodations must present a form from AccessTECH Disability Support Program specifying the details during the first week of classes. Their offices are located in 335 West Hall. See www.accesstech.dsa.ttu.edu.
- You will not be penalized for any absences due to religious observances. However, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance of any intended absences for religious observance *as soon as possible* so that we can make other arrangements. As well, it remains your responsibility to have read the material assigned for that day and to obtain any notes from one of your classmates for classes missed.

Classroom Courtesy

Please be courteous to your fellow students and avoid unnecessary disruptions. Arrive on time, leave on time, and *turn off your cell phone during class*. Note that if your cell phone rings during class, *I will answer it*. Laptops are permitted in class, but please do not abuse this privilege. Text-messaging is *not* permitted during my class. If you are seen text-messaging during class-time, your grade will be deducted 1 percent. This is your only warning. Likewise, for every class you miss without authorized excuse, your final grade will be deducted 1 percent.

The Writing Center

Particularly for new philosophy students, I strongly recommend that you work on your paper with a writing tutor. The Writing Center offers *free assistance* in room 175 of the Philosophy and English Building. See <http://english.ttu.edu/uwc01>.

Academic Integrity and Irresponsibility

I take incidents of academic misconduct *very seriously*. These include but are not restricted to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and fabrication. Penalties are dependent on the nature of the misconduct, and may involve disciplinary proceedings with the Student Judicial Programs. Knowing what constitutes academic misconduct is *your responsibility*. If you have a concern about what constitutes academic dishonesty *prior to turning in an assignment*, please see me, and I will be happy to help you. For more information, see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentjudicialprograms/academicinteg.php>.

Course Schedule

| Topic | Date | Readings |
|-----------------------|----------------|--|
| Introduction | Wed Jan 12 | <i>No Readings</i> |
| Arguments | Fri Jan 14 | <i>No Readings</i> |
| <i>No classes</i> | Mon Jan 17 | |
| The Meaning of Life | Wed Jan 19 | Albert Camus: "The Myth of Sisyphus"; Thomas Nagel: "The Absurd" |
| | Fri Jan 21 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| | Mon Jan 24 | Richard Taylor: "The Meaning of Human Existence" |
| | Wed Jan 26 | Raymond Martin: "A Fast Car and a Good Woman" [WEB] |
| | Fri Jan 28 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| Ethics | Mon Jan 31 | Aristotle: "Nicomachean Ethics" |
| | Wed Feb 2 | Thomas Nagel: "Aristotle on <i>Eudaimonia</i> " |
| | Fri Feb 4 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| | Mon Feb 7 | Jeremy Bentham: "The Principle of Utility"; John Stuart Mill: "Utilitarianism" |
| | Wed Feb 9 | Peter Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" |
| | Fri Feb 11 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| | Mon Feb 14 | Immanuel Kant: "Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals" |
| | Wed Feb 16 | Onora O'Neill: "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems" |
| | Fri Feb 18 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| | Mon Feb 21 | John Rawls: "A Theory of Justice" |
| | Wed Feb 23 | J.L. Mackie: "The Subjectivity of Values" |
| | Fri Feb 25 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| | Mon Feb 28 | Gilbert Harman: "Ethics and Observation" |
| | Midterm Review | Wed Mar 2 |
| Midterm Exam | Fri Mar 4 | <i>No Readings</i> |
| Minds & Consciousness | Mon Mar 7 | René Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> I and II |
| | Wed Mar 9 | David Armstrong, "The Nature of the Mind" |
| | Fri Mar 11 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| <i>Spring break</i> | Mar 12-20 | |
| Minds & Consciousness | Mon Mar 21 | A.M. Turing: "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" |
| | Wed Mar 23 | John Searle: "Minds, Brains, and Programs" |
| | Fri Mar 25 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| | Mon Mar 28 | Thomas Nagel: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" |
| | Wed Mar 30 | Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"; David Lewis, "Knowing What It's Like" |
| | Fri Apr 1 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| Personal Identity | Mon Apr 4 | John Perry: "A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality" |
| | Wed Apr 6 | Bernard Williams: "The Self and the Future" |
| | Fri Apr 8 | <i>(discussion)</i> |

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| | Mon Apr 11 | Derek Parfit: "Personal Identity" |
| | Wed Apr 13 | Daniel Dennett: "Where Am I?" |
| | Fri Apr 15 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| Freedom & Determinism | Mon Apr 18 | Roderick M. Chisholm: "Human Freedom and the Self" |
| | Wed Apr 20 | Peter Van Inwagen: "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will" |
| | Fri Apr 22 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| | Mon Apr 25 | David Hume: "Of Liberty and Necessity" |
| | Wed Apr 27 | Richard Taylor: "Freedom and Determinism" [WEB] |
| | Fri Apr 29 | <i>(discussion)</i> |
| Final Exam Review | Mon May 2 | <i>No Readings</i> |

Final Exam listed as taking place Saturday May 7, 10:30-1:00.